



The International Fancy Guppy Association



Dedicated to Promoting The Fancy Guppy Hobby

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The Makings Of A Guppy Club

By Frank Schulerbrandt

It isn't easy to form a guppy club. It is even harder to keep that club functioning year after year. Let me take this time to introduce myself, my name is Frank Schulerbrandt, current chairman of the South Jersey Guppy Group. I have been raising guppies for over 35 years. In 1975 I joined the Brooklyn Aquarium Society In New York City (right next to Coney Island). As a member of the BAS I met Fred Salandy, we were both interested in guppies, but there were not any guppy breeders in that club. We heard about a guppy club in New Jersey and we got all the information about when and where they held their meetings. In 1977 we joined the club, I have remained a member to this date.

During my early years in the South Jersey Guppy Group I asked Fred if he wanted to form a club in New York City, he said "yes". Fred introduced me to a gentleman named Warren Burke, we met at Warren's house in Richmond Hills Queens, New York two - three times developing strategy for forming a guppy club. In the next two months we made contact with the East Coast Guppy Association, based in Long Island. The ECGA was having a guppy auction in Rockville Center, LI; there we met our fourth and fifth members, John Eng and Eugene. A few weeks later while at an all species tropical fish show, I met Stephen Kwartler our sixth member. So as you can see we were picking up members here and there. We named our club the Big Apple Guppy Group, Warren's wife even made us a club banner. I was the president, Warren was the treasure, John was the secretary.

As the club grew, the nucleus of the club started to immerge, this nucleus would remain intact for five years, WE created such a good club that we won guppy club of the year. We had five or six places in the International Fancy Guppy Association GRAND OVERALL class. At the very height of our club we had twenty five members at each meeting. Ten - twenty bowl show entries, slide programs, auctions, raffles, just a great club. Everything was fine until the nucleus of the club quickly started to break up, first Steve got out of the hobby, three members passed away, Nick Repanes, Jack Fitzsimmons, Yezid Gueterrize. Every time we asked the membership for a new slate of officers they said keep the present slate. This was becoming a problem, as we could not get a new slate of officers... At this point I was very disappointed that we could not get more members involved in the running of the club. The next year Warren move to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and finally six months later while asking for a new slate of officers no one volunteered. I resigned and eventually quit the club.

The BAGG still exists but they are not active in the raising and showing of fancy guppies. Consider it "the death of a guppy club". I guess my point here is however good things are going always look for a way to improve the club, always try and get more people involved in the month to month decisions/operations of the club, change officers at least every one - two years, bring new people into the nucleus of the club the larger the nucleus the sounder the foundation of the club. Always ask the membership what they want. The older members of the club will always be there to suggest ideas based on their past experiences in the hobby, as that might relate to having a show, dealing with the IFGA ordering products, etc. The old timers should always be there to advise if needed. One must be careful if a whole new slate of officers is elected and none of the officers have any kind of experience in running the club. A slate like this should rely upon the advice of the old timers; and if the old timers see a problem developing they should immediately try to resolve this among the board or via the membership. After all you should not have a club that is almost in a state of being a dictatorship. All it takes is a strong personality to create this scenario.

The direction you take your club, should be at the very least a board decision, but more so it should be a club decision. If the club is to thrive or fail let it be a unified flight. Remember a club is a collection of members, its your club, make the best of it.

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Filtration



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